

Tips, Helpful Information/Travel Hints
for Students in the
J-1 Summer Work/Travel Program



from the Embassy of the United States of America



Embassy of the United States of America
Bratislava, Slovak Republic

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SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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A Message from Scott N. Thayer, Chargé d'Affaires

Dear Students,

Welcome! Thank you for choosing the United States as your destination for this year's J-1 Summer Work/Travel Program. Each year, thousands of Slovak students join others from countries around the world to improve their English, gain valuable work experience, meet new friends, and get a personal view of what the United States is really like. Many enjoy it so much they return for a second or third summer.

The United States and its citizens welcome this interaction with students from different countries. Our country is unique in the world, a diverse mixture of cultures in a geographically varied setting. Whether working in a summer beach town, a camp in the mountains, an amusement park in Middle America, or on the coast of Alaska, you are sure to have an experience to remember.

I encourage you to enjoy the 'travel' portion of the Work/Travel experience to its fullest. Venture beyond the town where you are working once your assignment is complete and use the 30 extra days allowed for travel before you return to school. To get you started thinking about where to go, my staff and I have written about our own hometowns. Also in this booklet you'll find some basic tips to help you start your Work/Travel experience right, web sites to visit about travel in the U.S., and helpful information from the Embassy of Slovakia.

I hope you will thoroughly enjoy both parts – work and travel – of your stay in the United States this summer.

Sincerely,

Scott N. Thayer

Praktické informácie

Skúsenosti nadobudnuté počas pobytu v USA sú veľmi špecifické a budú vás sprevádzať po celý život. Nasledujúce poznámky sú návrhmi, ktoré vám môžu pomôcť maximalizovať pozitívne stránky pobytu v USA.

Keď prídete po prvý raz na miesto vášho pobytu v USA, môžete mať pocit dezorientácie. Namiesto životného prostredia, ktoré je vám známe, sa budete pohybovať a konať v prostredí s iným jazykom a novou kultúrou.

Peniaze

Nenoste väčšie obnosy peňazí, preferujte bankomatové karty, prípadne cestovné šeky (traveler's checks). Cestovné šeky v hodnote 1000 USD môžu stačiť pred prvou výplatom. Prvú výplatu dostanete najskôr po dvoch týždňoch práce. Platobné karty z rôznych bánk typu MasterCard alebo Visa možno používať aj na platenie v obchodoch, ale je dôležité sledovať stav peňazí na účte.

Ubytovanie

Ak nemáte vopred zabezpečené ubytovanie, zoznam bytov na prenájom nájdete v miestnych novinách v časti Classified Ads. Do nákladov na ubytovanie zahrňte tzv. bezpečnostný depozit (security deposit) – nájomné za jeden mesiac. Predtým, ako sa nasťahujete, požiadaajte prenajímateľa o písomný zoznam vecí, ktoré bude pri vašom odchode kontrolovať. Depozit sa vracia na konci pobytu, alebo je poslednou mesačnou splátkou, ak prenájatý byt nepoškodíte. Zistíte si, či sú kúrenie, elektrina, plyn a odvoz odpadkov zahrnuté v nájomnom. Pri podpisovaní nájomnej zmluvy (lease agreement) si treba uvedomiť, že zmluvu podpisujete vopred na dlhšie obdobie a takúto zmluvu je potom veľmi ťažké zrušiť.

Doprava

Autobusová a vlaková doprava nie je taká rozsiahla a hustá ako v Európe. Väčšina Američanov vlastní autá, ktoré sú najbežnejšími dopravnými prostriedkami. Vo veľkých mestách, ako New York, Washington, DC, Chicago, San Francisco, existuje spoľahlivo fungujúci systém verejnej dopravy.

Spoločenský život

Američania sú priateľskí ľudia. Otázky "Ako sa máte?" alebo "Čo robíte?" sú ale iba spoločenskou fráзou, na ktorú sa nevyžaduje odpoveď.

Na verejných priestranstvách je zakázané piť alkohol. Na spoločenských akciách alebo návštevách sa očakáva odmietavý vzťah k alkoholu a fajčeniu. V USA môžu piť alkohol iba osoby, ktoré môžu zdokladovať, že dovišli 21 rokov.

Aktuálnou témou v Amerike je sexuálne obťažovanie. Muži si musia dávať pozor na dvojzmyselné reči, pohyby či správanie, ktoré by mohlo ženu uraziť.

Stravovanie sa v reštauračných zariadeniach

Keď vás Američan zavolá na obed alebo večeru, neznamená to, že bude za vás aj platiť. Ak nechcete platiť ako skupina, žiadajte oddelený účet (separate check). Za obsluhu sa necháva sprejitné do výšky 15 – 20 %. Po zaplatení účtu sa peniaze nechávajú čašníkovi, alebo sa položia na stôl.

Ďakujeme Fulbrightovej komisii za poskytnuté informácie.

Bezpečnosť

Telefónne číslo núdzového volania 911 použite na privolanie lekárskej a policajnej pomoci. Doklady a peniaze noste na bezpečnom mieste na tele alebo v dobre uzatvorenej taške. Pas s vízum a formulár DS 2019 majte pri sebe. Pre istotu si urobte fotokópie týchto dokladov.

Ak vás niekto chce okradnúť, nebráňte sa. Pasívne všetko odovzdajte. Vyhnete sa tak prípadným zraneniam.

Zdravotné poistenie

Pred cestou uzatvorte cestovné poistenie liečebných nákladov. Účastníci výmenných programov sú väčšinou poistení v rámci programu. Ak nie, treba sa v každom prípade poistiť už pred odchodom. Lekárske ošetrenie bez poistenia je veľmi drahé.

Ďalšie informácie

Ak máte sponzora, môže vám pomôcť a poradiť pri vybavovaní formalít. Zistíte si, ako sa dostanete do cieľa z miesta priletu.

Po pristáti v USA absolvujete imigračnú kontrolu, pri ktorej vám úradník skontroluje pas, vízum a formulár DS 2019, odoberie odtlačky prstov a urobí fotografiu ako súčasť registračného systému návštevníkov US-VISIT. Potom prejdete cez colnú kontrolu. Musíte priznať všetky predmety, ktoré privádzate, a ktoré nie sú určené pre vašu osobnú potrebu (napríklad darčeky je možné priviesť v hodnote do 100 USD). Vzhľadom na zdravotné obmedzenia nie je vždy možné priviesť do USA také veci ako mäso, semenka, čerstvé ovocie a zeleninu, živé zvieratá alebo rastliny. Pečené produkty, ryby a niektoré spracované potraviny sú povolené. Viac informácií nájdete na stránke www.cbp.gov.

V prípade potreby sa môžete obrátiť na slovenskú agentúru alebo amerického sponzora. Ak vám sponzor nesprostredkoval zamestnanie, musí vám poskytnúť informáciu ako si nájsť zamestnanie, dať zoznam zamestnávateľov a pomôcť zabezpečiť zamestnanie. Vaša agentúra a sponzor by vám mali pomôcť riešiť problémy s ubytovaním, so zamestnávateľom alebo urgentné zdravotné problémy. Váš americký sponzor je uvedený na formulári DS 2019 a treba sa uistiť, že máte naňho kontakt ešte pred vycestovaním.

Obstarajte si kópie dôležitých lekárskeho dokumentov a predpisov. Na batožinu pripievajte visačky (zvonku aj zvnútra) s adresou a telefónne číslo v USA aj na Slovensku. Oboznámte sa s predpismi leteckej spoločnosti, ktorá bude vás a vašu batožinu prepravovať. Zistíte si stav počasia v mieste vášho pobytu a podľa toho sa pobeľte.

Do lietadla si zoberte príručnú batožinu s najdôležitejšími osobnými vecami pre prípad, že by sa vaša batožina omeškala.

Čo sa týka daní, veľvyslanectvo nemá daňového poradcu, preto sa obráťte na vašu agentúru alebo americký daňový úrad na www.irs.gov. Prípadné otázky o karte sociálneho poistenia adresujte priamo úradu, kde ste žiadali o číslo SSN (Social Security Number).

Upozorňujeme vás, že elektrické napätie v USA je 110V (v Európe 220V), takže budete potrebovať transformátor (nie len adaptér), ak chcete používať európske elektrické prístroje. Ďalej upozorňujeme, že len niektorí mobilní operátori v USA používajú systém GSM, ktorý prevažuje na trhu v Európe a iba troj- alebo štvorpásmové telefóny sú prispôbené na prevádzku v Európe aj v USA. Ak máte takýto prístroj, môže využiť roaming partnerov vášho mobilného operátora (drahé riešenie), alebo si môžete zakúpiť SIM kartu nezávisle od prístroja a používať americké číslo.

Information from the Embassy of the Slovak Republic

Slovak students, if they find themselves in distress in the United States, may contact the Consular and Legal Section of the Slovak Embassy in Washington DC, Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in New York or Consulate General in Los Angeles according to their consular jurisdiction. Contact addresses are on the website (see <http://www.slovakembassy-us.org>, Visa and Consular Info). For information only they can contact also Slovak honorary consuls in the United States according to list on the same website <http://www.slovakembassy-us.org>, Contact Information, Honorary Consulates).

Konzulárna pomoc v zahraničí

Slovenská republika má v hlavných mestách viac ako 60-tich štátov svoje veľvyslanectvá, v rámci ktorých pracujú konzulárne oddelenia. Jednou z úloh týchto diplomatických úradov je pomáhať v zahraničí slovenským občanom, ktorí sa ocitli v núdzi. Právomoci konzulov sú stanovené medzinárodným právom ako aj vnútroštátnym právnym poriadkom Slovenskej republiky a krajiny ich pôsobenia. Napriek tomu, že tieto právomoci poskytujú dostatočné možnosti pomoci občanom v zahraničí, nie sú tieto právomoci neobmedzené.

Čo môže urobiť slovenský konzul ?

Môže vydať cestovný preukaz občanovi, ktorý na spätnú cestu do Slovenskej republiky nemá iný platný cestovný doklad. Môže kontaktovať príbuzných alebo známych, ktorí môžu občanovi bez finančných prostriedkov poslať peniaze. Môže poradiť, ako previesť peniaze zo Slovenska prostredníctvom peňažného ústavu do zahraničia. Môže odporučiť miestneho advokáta, ktorý poskytne odbornú právnu pomoc v prípade kontaktu občana s miestnou políciou alebo súdom. Môže odporučiť služby miestnych

lekárov, tlmočníkov. Môže informovať príbuzných alebo známych o nehode. Môže kontaktovať slovenských občanov vo väzbe a podávať o nich správy ich príbuzným a známym. Môže v každom prípade so znalosťou miestnych pomerov poradiť ako postupovať.

Čo nemôže urobiť slovenský konzul ?

Nemôže zaplatiť za občana cestovné lístky, kauciu ani žiadne účty, napríklad za liečenie, ubytovanie, právnu pomoc. Nemôže nahrádzať činnosť cestovných kancelárií, leteckých spoločností, bánk alebo iných špecializovaných organizácií. Nemôže slovenským občanom zabezpečiť lepšie zaobchádzanie ako s miestnymi občanmi napríklad v nemocniciach alebo väzniciach. Nemôže zasahovať do súdneho konania ani vyšetrovať trestné činy. Nemôže zaobstarávať prácu alebo pracovné povolenie. Nemôže poskytnúť ani zaobstarávať bezplatné ubytovanie.

Čo môže pre seba urobiť občan ?

Uistiť sa, že má platný cestovný pas a že vodičský preukaz je platný pre krajinu, do ktorej cestuje. Obstarávať si platné vízum, ak cestuje do krajiny, s ktorou máme vízovú povinnosť. Zabezpečiť si spätný cestovný lístok vopred. Zobrať si dostatočné množstvo finančných prostriedkov, najlepšie cestovné šeky. Uzatvoriť vopred zdravotné poistenie a zmluvné poistenie motorového vozidla pre zahraničie. Informovať sa o povinnom očkovaní pri cestách do mimoeurópskych a exotických krajín. Dodržiavať miestne predpisy, ktoré sú v každom štáte iné, takisto ako sankcie za ich porušenie. Vyhnúť sa akémukoľvek kontaktu s drogami a neprenášať pre cudzie osoby baliky cez colnú kontrolu. Zobrať si so sebou adresu a telefónne číslo slovenského veľvyslanectva v krajine, do ktorej cestuje.

Embassy of the Slovak Republic

www.slovakembassy-us.org, consul@slovakembassy-us.org

3523 International Court NW, Washington, DC 20008, tel. 202-237-1054, ext. 270, fax 202-237-6438

Consulate General of the Slovak Republic, 801 Second Avenue, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10017,

telephone: 212 286 8434, fax: 212 286 8439, e-mail: slovakconsulate_ny@verizon.net

Consulate General of the Slovak Republic, 10940 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste 2030, Los Angeles,

CA 90024, telephone: 310 209 1253, fax: 310 209 1261, martina_simkova@foreign.gov.sk

Resources for Planning Your Travel

Travel in the United States doesn't have to be expensive! You can see some great sights and still save money if you choose your transportation and accommodation wisely. Here are some helpful web sites:

GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

- ▶ Geography and Travel (usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/travel/travel.htm) – guide to key sites and features of the United States
- ▶ SeeAmerica.org – a portal to the major U.S. travel websites
- ▶ Fodors.com, Frommers.com, LonelyPlanet.com, VirtualTourist.com – worldwide travel guides
- ▶ Travelocity.com, Expedia.com, Orbitz.com – airline tickets, hotels, cars, vacations & cruises
- ▶ HiddenAmerica.com an “off-the-beaten path turn on the information highway”
- ▶ Citysearch.com city guide to entertainment, restaurants, events, hotels, movies and businesses
- ▶ Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC – slovakembassy-us.org

ATTRACTIONS/THINGS TO DO

- ▶ Recreation.gov – Recreation.gov is a partnership among various agencies aimed at providing a single, easy-to-use web site with information about public recreation areas. The site can be searched for recreation areas by state, by recreational activity, by agency, or by map.
- ▶ ThemeParks.About.com – information and reviews about theme parks and amusement parks

TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ RandMcNally.com, MapQuest.com – maps, driving directions, planning a trip
- ▶ Amtrak.com – Train travel
- ▶ Greyhound.com, PeterPanBus.com – Bus Travel

HOTELS & MOTELS

- ▶ All-Hotels.com: travel, hotels, discount hotel reservations and lodgings
- ▶ MagazineUSA.com – travel guide about the United States
- ▶ BudgetHotels.com – on-line reservations for hotels and motels
- ▶ Motel6.com, Super8.com – inexpensive hotel chains

ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

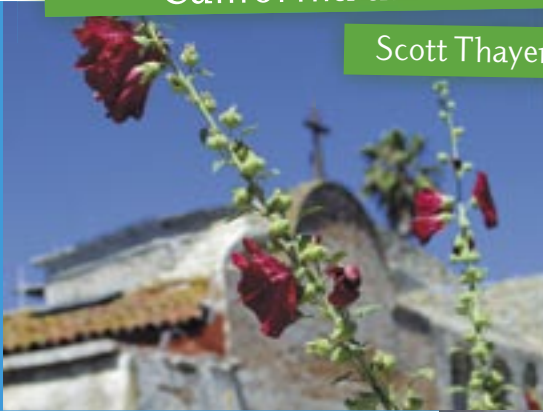
- ▶ YMCA.net – Young Men's Christian Association
- ▶ www.YWCA.org – Young Women's Christian Association
- ▶ Hostelling International-USA (hiayh.org) – the Hostelling International network in the U.S.
- ▶ Bed and Breakfast Inns – TravelData.com, bbonline.com, innplace.com
- ▶ HomeExchange.Com – international home exchange and home swap service
- ▶ GoCampingAmerica.com – official website of the non-profit National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds (ARVC), the trade association representing the commercial RV park and campground industry throughout the United States
- ▶ DudeRanches.com – resource for dude and guest ranches across North America

WEATHER AND CONVERSION TOOLS

- ▶ Weather.com, National Weather Service (nws.noaa.gov)
- ▶ Exchange Rate Conversion (www.oanda.com)
- ▶ Interactive Units Converter (sciencemadesimple.com/conversions.html) – measurements available for conversion include weight and mass, distance and length, capacity and volume, speed, and temperature

California and the Southwest:

Scott Thayer, Chargé d'Affaires



Mission San Juan Capistrano
Photos: Getty Museum, pdphoto.org

I'm from Southern California. Everyone has heard about the beaches, Disneyland, and Hollywood, but here are four things I tell everyone they shouldn't miss:

► Olvera Street and the California missions

Father Junipero Serra was a Spanish missionary who established a network of churches stretching the length of California. These in turn formed the basis for many of the major cities of California today, including San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and "El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora Reina de Los Angeles" (the City of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels) – Los Angeles. Olvera Street, located downtown near Union Station, features historic buildings, restaurants with authentic Mexican food, artisans making handicrafts, and stalls selling clothing and gifts from Mexico.

(http://www.olvera-street.com/html/olvera_street.html)



► The Getty Museum

Perched on a mountaintop with a commanding 270 degree view stretching from the skyscrapers of downtown Los Angeles to Santa Catalina island in the Pacific Ocean, the Getty Museum combines a world-class art collection and education program with a striking setting.

(www.getty.edu)

[Of course, there are many other world-class museums in Southern California, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Contemporary Art (www.lacma.org), the Norton Simon Museum (www.nortonsimon.org), and the Page Museum, one of the world's most famous fossil sites (www.tarpits.org).

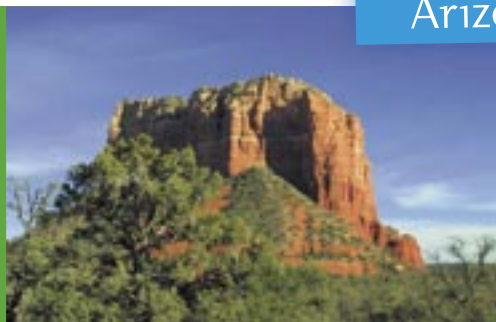
► The Hearst Castle at San Simeon

William Randolph Hearst was a fabulously wealthy and powerful figure in the United States. Publisher of a chain of newspapers all over the country, he not only reported the news but shaped it. He built himself a home on the California coast, about halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, which is amazingly lavish and became one of the world's greatest showplaces – an estate of 165 rooms and 127 acres of gardens, terraces, pools, and walkways. The blending of the architectural style with the surrounding land and Hearst's superb European and Mediterranean art collection is seamless. Find out more at www.hearstcastle.org.

► The Great Southwest

Much of the United States seems familiar to foreigners – cities, mountains, forests, farm land. The most unique part of the United States is the desert southwest encompassing parts of the states of California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and Colorado. Here are the great natural wonders of the Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest, Painted Desert, (all at www.nps.gov) and Monument Valley (www.navajonation-parks.org/monumentvalley.htm); engineering marvels of ancient man (the Mesa Verde cliff dwellings, also www.nps.gov) and modern man (Hoover dam, www.usbr.gov/lc/hoverdam and Glen Canyon dam, www.nps.gov); Hopi and Navajo Indian cultures; and the flash and neon of Las Vegas. Seeing all of this would take more than a week and driving over 1500 km, which would certainly gives you an idea of the scope of the United States, but the Vegas/Hoover Dam/Grand Canyon portion is pretty close together and begins only 5-6 hours' drive from Los Angeles.

Arizona: Leslie Heath, Vice Consul



Sedona

Photo: pdphoto.org

During the summer months, Northern Arizona offers an array of activities in a perfect climate. Not only is the Grand Canyon National Park a must see, but the red rocks of Sedona (see above) provide a unique landscape and the town houses a thriving artist community. Nearby one can find the prehistoric Anasazi ruins including Montezuma's castle – a large fortification built into the rocks – and Montezuma's well.

A short hour north is Flagstaff, which is nestled among the largest pine forest in the U.S. A variety of hiking trails lead to the top of the adjacent San Francisco Peaks. Southern Arizona offers other interesting aspects among a desert climate. Visitors can enjoy Wild West shows at the OK Corral, attend numerous cultural offerings in Tucson, or explore Arizona's largest city and capital, Phoenix. For more information: www.arizonaguide.com

Cleveland, Ohio: Barbara Zigli, Public Affairs Officer



Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Photo: Barbara Zigli

Cleveland, Ohio, calls itself “The Best Location in the Nation” and “America’s North Coast,” but I call it home. Located on the southern shore of Lake Erie, it offers a great combination of culture and fun. The Cleveland Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History are known for their superb collections, and the Cleveland Symphony is world famous.

But if you’re interested in something with a more modern beat, you shouldn’t miss the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. Its ultramodern glass building designed by I.M. Pei offers six floors of rock memorabilia – including Elvis Presley’s recording studio, as well as photos, costumes, instruments, music and film clips and special exhibits. Right next door on the lakefront is the Great Lakes Science Center, an engaging hands-on museum that makes science come alive.

If you’re more interested in the natural world, Cleveland is ringed by an “emerald necklace,” a 60-mile-long string of parks and gardens. You can even travel to the tropics at the Cleveland Zoo, which has an indoor tropical rainforest filled with plants, animals and insects.

When the sun goes down, the place to go is the Flats. This old industrial area along the Cuyahoga River has been revitalized and turned into a lively entertainment district with dozens of restaurants and nightclubs. Nearby is Jacobs Field, home of Cleveland’s beloved baseball team, the Cleveland Indians.

However, the best thing about Cleveland is the people. The city has attracted immigrants from all over the world (including a large number of Slovaks), and so it has a wide variety of ethnic restaurants and festivals. And most important – a welcoming heart. For more information, visit www.travelcleveland.com.

Detroit, Michigan: Nikolas Trendowski, Vice Consul



The Spirit of Detroit



A View of the Metro Detroit skyline

Photos: Vito Palmisano, Detroit Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau

I'm from Detroit, Michigan. Detroit is the historic home of the American automobile. Now, cars are made all over the world, including in Slovakia. But the auto industry left its mark, for better and worse. Detroit has, in the past few years, been experiencing a revival of its downtown area. There are renovated theaters, casinos, Greektown, the Red Wings, summer festivals, and more all downtown. North of downtown, in the Cultural Center, you'll find a world-class art museum and library as well as the Historical and African-American museums.

Farther north is Hamtramck, a small town surrounded by Detroit that has the highest percentage of Polish residents of any city in the U.S., with its summer festival and Polish bakeries and restaurants.

Detroit was once mainly a European and African-American city; today it's majority African-American and the suburbs have become very multicultural.

Dearborn, the suburb to the southwest, has the highest concentration of residents of Arabic descent outside the Middle East. Also in Dearborn you can find Henry Ford's home and a museum full of pieces of American life from cars to dishware as well as a village of historic American homes and buildings that Ford collected. The other car company founders are represented too with mansions in other suburbs.

You can find travel information about Detroit at www.visitdetroit.com, or call 1-800-DETROIT. You can find more travel information about all of Michigan, from the Detroit suburbs all the way to the tip of the Upper Peninsula, at www.michigan.org.

West Virginia: Daria Darnell, Consul



Blackwater Falls

Photo: Daria Darnell

I'm from Martinsburg, West Virginia. During the Civil War (1861-1865), Martinsburg was an important railroad center and the site of many battles between the North and the South. Martinsburg passed between Union and Confederate hands as many as 60 times. You can still tour Boydville, the home of Belle Boyd, who was a Confederate spy during the War. Close to Martinsburg is Harpers Ferry, another important site during the Civil War and today home to the Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival that takes place each spring and fall.

If you like outdoor activities, such as hiking, bicycling, canoeing, horseback riding, and rock climbing, West Virginia is a great place to visit. We have nearly 50 state parks and forests. Blackwater Falls State Park has beautiful waterfalls (see photo above) and 40 km of hiking trails. Seneca State Forest is close to the Greenbrier River and has a huge forest for hiking and a lake. The Greenbrier River Trail runs along an old railroad line and is over 120 km long.

You can use the Trail for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and access to the Greenbrier River for fishing and canoeing. You can take rides on original steam-driven trains at Cass Scenic Railroad State Park. These are just a few of our state parks and forests; you can find information about all of them at <http://www.wvstateparks.com/>.

The capital of West Virginia is Charleston. In Charleston you can listen to live folk music at "Mountain Stage," tour the historic East End, and visit the new Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences. Charleston is also home to many festivals featuring international films, statewide theater and outdoor symphony concerts. Wheeling is another lovely city, in the northern part of the state, with beautiful old homes from the late 19th century. Coal is one of the most important resources of West Virginia, and the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine has underground tours of an authentic coal mine.

You can find more information about West Virginia at <http://www.wvtourism.com>.

Oshkosh, Wisconsin: Kathleen Ebert, Office Management Specialist



*Photos: Oshkosh Convention
& Visitors Bureau*

I'm from Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Oshkosh's nickname is "Sawdust City." It was a major lumber town with lumber mills up and down the Fox River. The logs floated on the river downstream to the mills where the wood was made into doors, sashes, windows, homes, and other wood items. The lumber mills are now gone but it wasn't that long ago when I remember the wood logs stacked up by the river's edge ready to be cut. The city is the home of Oshkosh Truck and Oshkosh B'Gosh. Oshkosh got its name from Chief Oshkosh, leader of the Menominee Indian tribe.

Fur traders from France were the first settlers of Oshkosh and it became a large and important trading post. Oshkosh also attracted many immigrants from Germany and the French influence eventually disappeared. Oshkosh and the surrounding small towns were also settled by Poles, Swedes, Norwegians, and Volga-Russians. Now the new arrivals are Hmong who come from Laos. Oshkosh has a population of approximately 55,000 people.

Every year, July 25-31 this year, Oshkosh hosts the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA). People from all over the world come to the fly-in with their airplanes, some home-built, some

modern, and some vintage. They talk shop, attend seminars, and put on air shows – the Canadian Warbirds are a favorite.

Sometimes there is a special exhibit that comes to town such as the Concorde (rides to Canada and back in one hour), a big Qantas jet (the runway had to be expanded), a large military cargo plane that had tours, or the Stealth Bomber (cool). Celebrities who have an interest in airplanes or space travel appear such as John Glenn, Chuck Yeager, and last year Harrison Ford. The event is open to the public and always attracts large crowds.

There are several museums in town but my favorite is the Paine Art Center and Gardens that used to be a private home. Nathan Paine was a lumber baron and the large Paine Lumber Factory sawmill was turned into luxurious condos overlooking the river.

Three bodies of water are central to life in Oshkosh – the Fox River, Lake Winnebago, and Lake Butte des Morts (French for "lake of the dead"). Any time the weather is good there are boats a-plenty that cruise up and down the water. Lake Winnebago is the largest lake in Wisconsin and is a hubbub of activity all year round with boating, swimming, fishing, and ice-fishing.

You can find travel information on Oshkosh at www.oshkoshonthewater.com or www.oshkoshcvb.org. Travel information on Wisconsin can be found at www.wisconsin.gov or www.wisconsin.org.

Madison, Wisconsin: Samuel Dykema, General Services Officer



View of the Capitol from State Street
*Photo: Skot Weidemann, Greater Madison
Convention and Visitors Bureau*

UW-Madison Library Mall
Photo: William Patterson



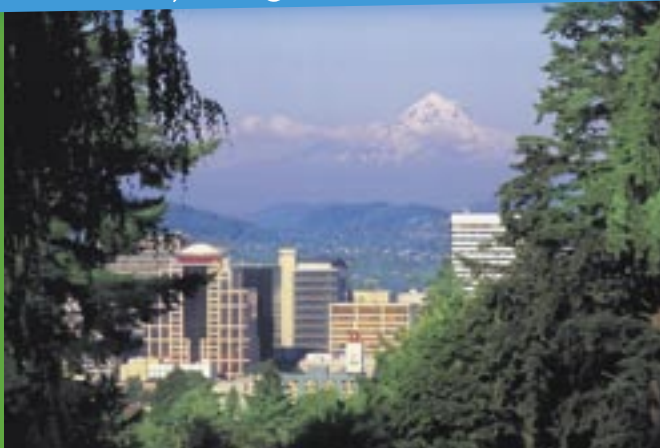
Capital of the Mid-western state of Wisconsin, Madison is situated between two large lakes. It is home to the University of Wisconsin, one of the U.S. 'Big 10' state universities. It also has a majestic granite-and-marble State Capitol building with the second-largest dome in the U.S. after Washington, DC. The Frank Lloyd Wright conference center is a newly built spectacular lakefront building based on 40-year-old plans done by the famous architect.

A great small city to visit, especially in the summer when there are fewer students, but still lots of activity on the University campus and around the city. The Capitol square hosts a large Saturday farmers market with local products from the surrounding Wisconsin farms.

Bristling with cafes, clubs and restaurants, boutiques and shops, including a couple of outlet discount stores (Lands' End, Rag Stock) Madison's State street is a fun and easy place to shop. The University Student Union is on a beautiful terrace overlooking lake Mendota. It hosts frequent outdoor and indoor concerts, movies and other event, has a nice cafeteria, a reading room, game rooms and other amenities – open to a visiting student.

Any of the exchange students who are in the vicinity would do well to check it out. There is a bus connection to Chicago O'Hare airport, and express busses to Milwaukee. On a net search engine (Google) type in Madison, Wisconsin and find lots of sites (e.g. www.visitmadison.com) about discount hotels, events, etc.

Portland, Oregon: Kellan Owens, Community Liaison Officer



Portland Skyline
*Photo: Portland
Oregon Visitors
Association*

There is no more beautiful drive than taking Highway 101 up the Oregon Coast. The rugged coastline affords stunning views and vistas that have been untouched by development. The entire coastline is public land and is perfect for enjoying the great outdoors with the Pacific Ocean as your backyard.

Following the coastline north, you'll come upon Cannon Beach, a quaint little town filled with art galleries, bookstores, espresso and ice cream stores! What more could you want on a warm summer day? You can rent bicycles, ride horses or fly a kite on the beautiful expanse of beach that is just two blocks from the downtown.

After leaving Cannon Beach you can head east to Portland, Oregon. Portland, located just 1.5 hours from the coastline, is Oregon's largest city. Located on the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, Portland is a beautiful city that is commonly known as the Rose City. During June, Portland boasts the largest Rose Festival in the United States.

The city is teeming with roses, from the renowned Rose Festival Parade (where all the floats are deco-

rated in fresh roses and flowers) to the numerous fun runs, bicycle events, and outdoor concerts that are free to the public. Oregonians love the outdoors, so there is no shortage of activities to enjoy. It is no wonder NIKE athletic shoes and clothing is headquartered here. The city is filled with public parks, and great expanses along the river that are perfect for running, biking, kayaking, boating, or just enjoying the beauty of the outdoors with a latte from one of hundreds of espresso stores throughout the city.

And, not to be missed, just one hour from Portland is the stunning Mt. Hood, which can be seen from Portland on a clear day. A great day trip is to drive to Mt. Hood and have lunch at the historic Timberline Lodge. And, for the athletically inclined, there is skiing at Timberline all year long. Or, you can take the lift to the top of the mountain and enjoy a truly breathtaking view.

For more information, visit www.travelportland.com.

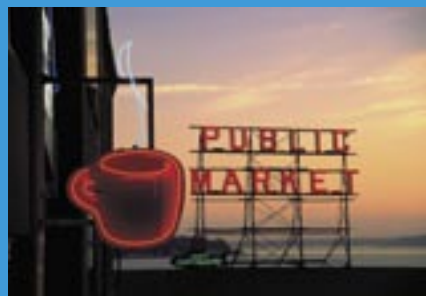
Ready to enjoy more of the beautiful Northwest? Take Interstate 5 North to Seattle, Washington, an easy 3-hour drive.

Seattle, Washington: Sandy Owens, Senior Commercial Officer



Seattle downtown skyline with Space Needle; Pike Place Market

Photos: Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau, right: Tim Thompson



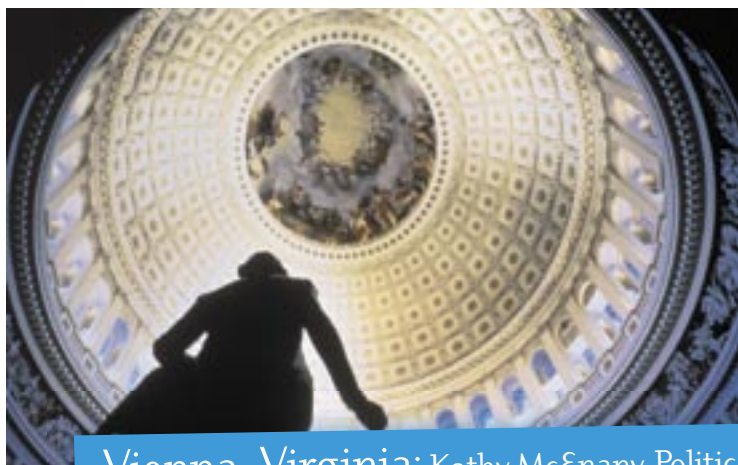
Seattle, the Emerald City, is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest and sits on beautiful Puget Sound. Seattle is bordered by the Olympic Mountain Range to the west and Cascade Mountains on the east and is home to some of the fastest growing Fortune 500 companies in America, including Microsoft in Redmond, Boeing Airplane Group, Amazon.com founded by Jeff Bezos, and for the caffeinated among us, Starbucks. Seattle is the origin of today's coffee culture as four young university students started Starbucks in the early 80's and later it was transformed into the barista slinging business it is today when an entrepreneur bought it in 1989. Today there are more than 4,000 stores around the world.

The Seattle Mariners baseball team and the Seattle Seahawks football franchise, along with the Seattle SuperSonics, make up the professional sports teams in Seattle. Safeco Field is a beautiful outdoor baseball stadium that sits alongside the Seattle Seahawks football stadium built by Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft. For those that love the outdoors, nothing beats Seattle for sports activities. Seattle offers unlimited hiking on hundreds of mountain trails and on the Olympic Peninsula, skiing is a year round sport, biking and off-road biking is very popular, and Seattle boasts the largest per capita ownership of boats in the United States. Seattle is also home to some of the best seafood restaurants in the country and

enjoys a well-deserved reputation for its spotless downtown area and beautiful parks.

A typical day for a visitor to Seattle would start in the Pike Place Market, a large fish and fruit open market, enjoying (what else!) fresh baked cinnamon rolls with an extra foam, grande, non-fat latte. Then a short hike to the waterfront would put you on one of Seattle's famous ferries to Bainbridge Island where you could work up a thirst visiting one of the many microbreweries. After a bike around the island, and returning to Seattle the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) is your first stop on First Street and later a walk through the historic Pioneer Square. One thing you can't miss is a visit to some of the best and largest bookstores on the West Coast. Seattle's culture makes it the perfect environment to grab a bestseller and cup of joe and while the afternoon away.

For nighttime entertainment there are many nightclubs and pubs with live bands, many of which were once home to the original grunge rock groups like Pearl Jam and Nirvana. Of course for those a little older, there is Jazz Alley with jazz clubs for every taste. As the night winds down don't forget to pay a visit to the Seattle Space Needle, built for the 1963 World's Fair, located next door to the Jimi Hendrix Museum. For more information, visit www.seeseattle.org.



Capitol Dome (inside)

*Photo: Washington,
DC Convention and
Tourism Corporation*

Vienna, Virginia: Kathy McEnany, Political/Economic Section

The Vienna-to-Vienna Connection: My hometown, Vienna, Virginia, has a nonstop flight connection from its namesake to Dulles Airport that's faster than some ferries across the English Channel or the Baltic Sea. The excellent flight connections can make Slovakia and Virginia seem just around the corner.

Vienna is one of the many suburbs of Washington, DC, and is located 10 kilometers from the district line. Washington, DC, is the same size as Bratislava – with 500,000 inhabitants – but the metropolitan area numbers nearly 3 million. Most of the Washington suburbs are connected by the subway system or by bus, called the Metro.

Washington, DC, is one of the best bargains in the country for tourists. With support from the federal government, the Smithsonian Institution has one of the most extensive museum collections in the country and it is all free of charge. Some of the favorites among tourists are the Air and Space Museum and the new National Museum of the American Indian. A tour of Washington would not be complete without visiting the landmarks of note (the White House, Congress, and the Washington Monument), but also take a culinary tour around the world. A popular neighborhood called Adams Morgan has many fine ethnic restaurants for reasonable prices, including those specializing in Ethiopian and Caribbean cuisine, to name a few.

For students and tourists who prefer to spend their time outdoors, the metropolitan area has a lot of offer. In the summer, one of the main thoroughfares through the city is closed to traffic and roller-blades have the right of way. In the surrounding area, there are miles of bike trails for enthusiasts leading to some of the finest early American historical sites, such as George Washington's home, and beautiful local and national parks. The Blue Ridge Mountains and canoeing opportunities in the Shenandoah Valley are only a few hours away by car.

Vienna is renowned throughout the area as a center for the arts. The Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts operates two venues for ballet, concerts, and theater on the property of an old farm. The Filene Center offers lawn seating for fantastic student-friendly prices to see some of the best performances the U.S. has to offer. Don't forget to bring a picnic, opera glasses, and a sweater. Others may be attracted to the Vienna area not only for the arts, but also for the shopping. Nearby is Tysons Corner Center, which is one of the largest on the East Coast, and the adjacent Tysons Galleria.

You may not find many similarities between Vienna, Virginia and the Austrian capital, but the small Washington community is located at a crossroads leading to a variety of possible experiences. For more information: www.washington.org.

Travel and Enjoy the USA!



Zion National Park, Utah; Yosemite National Park, California; Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming; Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York. For more information on U.S. National Parks: www.nps.gov.

These photos show some of the sights in our National Parks.

This year, when you travel, take a photo and send it to us! A jury of Embassy staff members will select winning photos. The top 3 will receive a book from the Public Affairs section and the photos will be displayed in InfoUSA Centers in Kosice and Bratislava. All photos must be received at our office no later than December 1, 2005. Only one photo entry per person, please.

By entering your photo, you waive all copyrights and restrictions on publication and display by the U.S. Embassy.

Also, please let us know your comments about this booklet and whether you found it useful this summer.

You may contact us at cons@usembassy.sk, or by mail at Consular Section, U.S. Embassy, P.O. Box 309, 814 99 Bratislava, Slovak Republic.



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